State of Iowa IT Project Request # 11

State Scholarship, Grant, and Loan Repayment Application and Processing System

Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Program Administration

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Document Purpose: This document is to be completed when there is an identified need and tentative plan to initiate a project. Funding may not have been identified for the project yet (seeking IOWAccess funding, waiting on legislative decision or grant award). The Project Request is submitted to the TCC IPSC to gain support for the project and identify if there are existing applications or application components that can leveraged for the proposed project. This document is intended to answer high level questions about the project as details about total cost, timeframe and quantified benefits are not known as this document is expected to be completed during project planning. Submit this document to: xxxxx@iowa.gov TCC approval of this document results in the permission to proceed with project planning. Agency may be directed to complete the Project Execution Request before issuing an RFP or beginning internal development work.

Project Summary

Project Name: _State Scholarship, Grant and Loan Repayment Application and Processing System

Problem Statement: [*What is the need? How will this address that need?*]

Commission staff intends to upgrade the current scholarship, grant, and loan repayment systems in order to provide one comprehensive application and processing system. The upgraded system will provide enhanced functionality in a more efficient, streamlined and secure manner for approximately 200,000 Iowa student/parents, 510 high school/TRIO coordinators and nearly 80 colleges and universities. The new system will improve the administration and distribution of approximately $70 million in state-appropriated funding annually.

The primary scholarship and grant system was purchased from a vendor approximately 10 years ago, and has been continuously built upon to produce the web of systems in place today. In total, nine 'auxiliary' systems collect applications and administer funding for state financial aid and loan repayment programs. The majority of these systems were built in .ASP technology. Not only does the security structure need to be upgraded to comply with privacy and security standards, but the agency no longer employs a full-time programmer to service/upgrade these systems.

Commission staff seeks permission to issue an RFP to find the best-fitting and most cost-effective solution.

Project Description: [*What is the purpose of this project? What are the project goals?]*

Acquire a comprehensive scholarship, grant, and loan repayment application and processing system that will provide enhanced functionality in a more efficient, streamlined and secure manner for Iowa students, parents and financial aid administrators.   The system will improve the collection of approximately 200,000 applications annually, determine student eligibility, and distribute funding for 30,000 students.

What are your success criteria? [*What does success look like?]*

Our success criteria include:

- Enhanced security of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

- A system which does not require duplicate data entry for internal staff or our college/university clients.

- A single web-based system, in a more current coding structure, that will eliminate the need for nine separate systems and that can accommodate the creation of new programs as the Legislature passes new laws.

Are you aware of any potential solutions? *[Describe Solutions]*

1. Nelnet offers a web-based scholarship and grant management system http://guarantorsolutions.nelnet.com/guarantorsolutions/grant-pro.aspx?id=1885&path=grt.grp .

2. Goldbridge Partners, Inc. offers a web-based scholarship and grant management system http://www.gbpi.net/index.php/software-product/financial-aid/.

3. Oracle indicates it could build something to agency specifications.

Benefits Summary

[Describe specific benefits and how these will be measured and reported. Who are the customers of this project and how do they benefit?]

External customer benefits:

- Streamline the administration and distribution of approximately $70 million in state-appropriated monies. Improved efficiencies would be realized by approximately 200,000 applicants, 510 high school /TRIO coordinators and nearly 80 colleges and universities.

- Improve the Commission's data collection and reporting capabilities to students, college and university officials, and elected officials so they can make better decisions about the state student financial aid programs.

- The system would replace the current system servers and code (.asp) with upgraded servers, code (.net), and security technology. It would also create a 'one-stop shop' for scholarship, grant, and loan repayment program processing.

- The system would guarantee data integrity, security and consistency throughout all the Iowa College Aid systems by storing student data in a single location. It prevents student data from being out of sync by providing a single, authoritative source for these records.

Internal customer benefits:

- When changes to the system need to be made (to allow for a new program or changes in rule/law) staff wouldn't need to develop upgrades and ensure consistency across nine systems.

- Strengthen the security of all information maintained by the Commission.

- Transfer the need to maintain IT staff to enhance and upgrade system.

Project Impact: What is the impact if this project is not approved?

If this project is not approved, the Commission will continue to utilize the current systems to manage the state aid programs. Continual system patches and workarounds will be implemented to enhance security and to ensure programs are administered in the best interests of our external clients.

Project Technology: [*What technologies will be used in the project?*]

The system would replace the current system servers and code (.asp) with upgraded servers, code (.net), and security technology. Application and system will meet all applicable federal, state, and Commission standards, as well as the criteria listed below.

- Web-based application and system with data encrypted and stored on a secure server in a physically secure facility.
- Varying levels of access to system based on user job assignment/responsibility.
- Utilize established data integrity processes to validate program data.
- The architecture should have sufficient capabilities to provide 24x7 access and operability.

Project Type: Maintenance _____ New _x____ Multi-phased _____

Maintenance is a work to be completed on an existing software or hardware asset. Examples: migrating all agency applications to MS SQL 2012; updating a specific application to be 508 compliant and improve accessibility;

New is a project that has a single phase. Examples: Rewrite a client server application into a web application; Replace an MS Access application with a client server application and SQL database; Create a new application to meet a new federal or state initiative.

Multi-phased is a new project with multiple phases or the subsequent phase of a project already implemented. Example: The project is intended in Phase 1 to implement the web application, Phase 2 will add epayment and a mobile application and Phase 3 will expand application to another program area.

External/Internal Urgency: Are there any funding/legislative deadlines that impact this request? Are there organizational/staffing changes impacting the request?

None known at this time.

Funding Summary

Estimated total Project Costs: *[Provide a high level estimate or range]*

Under 50k _____   50 to 100k _____   100-500k _____   500k to 2 million _____

2M to 5M _____   Over 5M _____   Unknown _x_ until the RFP's are received/reviewed

Funding Source: [*Iowa Access, Pool, Federal Grant, etc.*]

Possible funding sources for this project:

- Iowa Access funding
- Commission Operating Fund
- Request state-appropriated dollars

Project Sustainability [Describe the plan to support and maintain this project. What kind of on-going costs will there be during the lifetime of this asset?]

Unknown until the RFP's are received/reviewed. There will likely be an upfront purchase cost and an annual maintenance fee.

Risk Assessment

[*Describe specific risks and how they will impact the project. How will these be mitigated?*]

- Our college/university clients are very familiar with the current systems and their functionality – Commission staff will involve them in the RFP selection to obtain comments and buy-in for the transition to a new system.

- Transition timeframe – system must be fully tested and implemented in the right timeframe to meet our application cycle.

- Non-delivery on contracted services – the successful vendor will be held to certain deliverables by certain timeframes.

- End product may not be as user-friendly as current system.

- Cost - a system of this magnitude is likely to require a major investment. Is the state prepared to make this investment and maintain each year?

Recommendations and Approvals   *[Will be completed during the review process]*

Recommendation of the State CIO to the DAS Director:

Authorize this IT procurement   Yes _X_ No ___

Alternatives suggested by the State CIO   Yes ___   No _X_

Additional comments from the State CIO:

   TEC recommends ICSAC to go out for RFP and share those results with the TEC. CIO subsequently approved.

DAS Director's action:

Authorize this IT procurement   Yes _X_ No ___

DAS Director's signature and date:

   The above IT procurement concept approved by Director Carroll on __7/12/13__

Comments: **None.**